

Tracking Tribune Newsletter #5 – November 2014

Tracking Network Celebrates 5-Year Anniversary

When the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network officially launched in July 2009, it was the first surveillance system to provide environmental and health data together in one place. Since then, the Tracking Network has grown and expanded in the amount and variety of data in the system. In the past five years, we've added a multitude of new content [JM1] including climate change, health impacts of fine particles in air, smoking, access to parks, and more. Currently, the Tracking Network boasts data for 17 content areas, 93 indicators and 341 individual measures.

Not only has the content in the Tracking Network improved over the years, so has the functionality of what you are able to do with that data. You can now view animated timeline maps, use our coronary artery disease and health impact assessment tool related to outdoor air quality, and export data for research and analysis. All of these features and more make it easier to see and understand how the environment impacts your health.

The Tracking Network also includes a variety of other tools you can use to learn more about Tracking, inform others, and stay up-to-date with network news. We offer seven communication toolkits which provide messaging for several environmental factors and health outcomes such as women's health, heart health, and climate change. Additionally, we provide infographics and animated maps to help users better understand the important role the environment plays in public health. You can view these on the Network and embed them into your website. We also have several options for training including an online course called Tracking in Action and materials that can be used in a college class setting.

More improvements and additions are coming soon. We are developing content and data for pesticide exposures, access to public elementary schools, and prevalence of obesity and alcohol use. We will be introducing the ability to analyze multiple measures at one time, along with a more user-friendly "information by location" web page that provides socio-economic data in an infographic style design. As we celebrate the 5th anniversary of the Tracking Network, we look forward to what the future holds as we continue "keeping track and promoting health."

Health Impact Assessment Section Added to Tracking Network

The Tracking Network has launched a new Health Impact Assessment (HIA) section. It includes content and tools that illustrate how Tracking Network data can be used in HIAs. In this area you can find stories and reports from grantees who have used Tracking Network data for HIAs, diagrams that illustrate examples of use related to transportation, land use, and extreme heat, links to additional resources, and more.

Tracking Representation at 2014 CSTE Annual Conference

CDC's Environmental Public Health Tracking Program was well-represented at this year's Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) Annual Conference. More than 50% of the presentations and posters were presented by CDC Tracking staff and grantee programs.

Held in Nashville, June 22-24, the conference featured 14 presentations and 6 posters by CDC and Tracking grantee states. The topics included private well water, small area estimations, community health profiles, and cancer. Four additional presentations by Tracking grantees were made during the pre-conference workshop and focused on small area estimation techniques and sub-county level data display.

Recent Radon, Smoking, and Lung Cancer Webinar Still Available

In May 2014, five Tracking Program grantee states (Colorado, Kansas, New Jersey, Vermont, and Washington) presented a webinar titled: *Radon, Smoking, and Lung Cancer – Tracking States Collaborate to Improve Visualization and Outreach*. During this webinar the presenters showcased work done with state-based partners to make lung cancer incidence, radon potential, and smoking rates publicly available at geographical scales below county-level. Presenters highlighted reusable project components that can be adapted for use by public health organizations, and state and local health and environmental departments for Radon Action Month 2015, and shared lessons they learned while undertaking this project. The webinar reached over 220 participants including state health department officials and public health professionals around the nation along with participants from Canada, the United Kingdom, and Italy. The recorded webcast is now available on the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors website:

http://chronicdisease.site-ym.com/members/group_content_view.asp?group=128552&id=385881 

Tracking Success Stories

Lyme Disease Cases on the Rise in Maine

Concern around the risks for Lyme disease as a result of a tick bite has risen since the number of new cases of Lyme disease in Maine has increased dramatically over the past two decades. All residents and visitors are potentially at risk for Lyme disease through tick bites. Raising public awareness of the Lyme disease risk and promoting prevention and early detection can reduce the number of Lyme disease cases and the health effects that come from this disease. In an effort to respond to public requests for information more efficiently, the [Maine Tracking Program](#)  collaborated with the Division of Infectious Disease to include Lyme disease data on Maine's Tracking Network. The Tracking program then widely publicized the availability of the Lyme disease data to the public, health professionals and local officials. Currently, Lyme disease data are the most frequently visited topic since the Maine Tracking Network's launch, showing the value of this information.

Using Tracking Network Data to Improve Outreach and Awareness in Minnesota

Historically, there has been no national-level surveillance data on Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) prevalence even though this condition affects more than 15 million adults in the United States. This information gap makes it difficult for decision-makers to plan public health actions and make informed policy decisions to reduce COPD. With help from the [Minnesota Tracking Program](#) , Minnesota was one of the first states in the country to measure COPD burden statewide. Tracking Program staff analyzed risk factors, hospital, and death certificate data for the state to determine the number of COPD cases, rates of hospital stays, and death rates by race and ethnicity. The Tracking Program provided [data](#) , which showed striking disparities particularly for Native Americans compared to other groups. In 2014, the Tracking Program will publish new data on COPD hospital stays by ZIP code for the Twin Cities metropolitan area, which will aid in focusing resources where they are most needed. Because of the efforts of the Minnesota Tracking Program, COPD data are now available for decision-makers, health care and public professionals, and community organizations who can work to reduce COPD in the state.

NACCHO Announces the Release of the Environmental Public Health Tracking Toolkit

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) recently announced the release of its Environmental Public Health Tracking Toolkit. NACCHO's toolkits are free, online, searchable collections of tools and resources that can be used to inform and improve communities' work in promoting and advancing public health objectives. The Tracking Toolkit is comprised of resources, case examples, guides, webinars, reports, and papers related to building Tracking Program infrastructure, communicating about what environmental public health tracking is and its value, education and training materials, and how data from the National Tracking Network can be used to inform decision makers and other stakeholders about the linkages between environmental conditions and chronic disease. The toolkit is available from:

<http://www.naccho.org/toolbox/> .

View Previous Issues

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